

Message Text

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44

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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O 261421Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5421

INFO CINCPAC

SECDEF WASHDC

JCS

CNO

CINCPACFLT

COMUSMACHTAI BANGKOK

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 12193

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, MILI, MOPS, TH, XO, US

SUBJECT: U.S. INDIAN OCEAN ACTIVITIES FROM THAILAND

REF: A. STATE 161054; B. BANGKOK 11854; C. STATE 157992;

D. BANGKOK 11615; E. STATE 153592; F. BANGKOK 11938;

G. BANGKOK 12194

SUMMARY: THE FOREIGN MINISTER TOLD AMBASSADOR KINTNER ON JULY 26 THAT OUR REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF RTG AGREEMENT TO U.S. INDIAN OCEAN ACTIVITIES FROM THAILAND, INCLUDING NONRECONNAISSANCE P-3 AND OTHER AIRCRAFT SUPPORT FLIGHTS, WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE GOVERNMENT FOR CONSIDERATION AND DECISION. AFTER A WIDE RANGE OF ARGUMENTS BY THE AMBASSADOR, THE FOREIGN MINISTER RELUCTANTLY AGREED THAT SUPPORT FLIGHTS INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN CAN CONTINUE PENDING A FINAL DECISION BY THE RTG. THE FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED THAT ABSOLUTELY NO PUBLICITY BE GIVEN TO U.S. INDIAN OCEAN SUPPORT ACTIVITIES. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT NOTHING BE DONE TO AFFECT ADVERSELY THE FINAL RTG DECISION DURING THE TIME IT IS UNDER CONSIDERATION. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR KINTNER MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHARUNPHAN ON JULY 26 TO SOLICIT THE RTG'S REACTION TO OUR ASSUMPTION THAT
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NONRECONNAISSANCE (INCLUDING P-3) INDIAN OCEAN FLIGHTS WERE

NOT BANNED BY THE RECENT RTG DECISION. PRESENT AT THE MEETING BESIDE THE AMBASSADOR AND FOREIGN MINISTER WERE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI, THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION, THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE POLITICAL DIVISION, THE AMERICA DESK OFFICER, THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S PRIVATE SECRETARY, AND THE ACTING CHIEF OF THE EMBASSY'S POLITICAL SECTION. THE MEETING WAS HELD AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND LASTED ONE HOUR.

2. AFTER THE AMBASSADOR PREPARED THE GROUND AND PRESENTED OUR CASE ON THE MATTER, THE FOREIGN MINISTER STATED THAT THE QUESTION OF ALL USG ACTIVITIES FROM THAILAND INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN, INCLUDING NONRECONNAISSANCE P-3 AND OTHER SUPPORT FLIGHTS, WOULD HAVE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE GOVERNMENT FOR CONSIDERATION AND DECISION. HIS INITIAL REMARKS INDICATED THAT ALL U.S. INDIAN OCEAN SUPPORT FLIGHTS WOULD HAVE TO CEASE UNTIL SUCH POLICY REVIEW WAS COMPLETED. HE EXPLAINED, AS HE HAD STATED IN THE JULY 12 MEETING, THAT BASES IN THAILAND WERE IN PRINCIPLE MADE AVAILABLE TO U.S. MILITARY FORCES ONLY FOR USE RELATED TO INDOCHINA. HE STRESSED THAT ANY USE OF THAI BASES FOR PURPOSES APART FROM THIS MUST BE FORMALLY CONSIDERED AND APPROVED BY THE RTG.

3. THE AMBASSADOR, NOT WANTING TO ACQUIESCE IN THIS ASSERTION, IMMEDIATELY STATED HE HAD ASSUMED THAT U.S. SUPPLY AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES WERE NOT AFFECTED BY THE RTG BAN ON P-3 RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS AND ASKED THAT SUPPORT FLIGHTS BE CONTINUED AT LEAST UNTIL A FORMAL DECISION WAS MADE ON THE MATTER BY THE RTG. THE AMBASSADOR WENT TO GREAT LENGTHS TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE FLIGHTS TO THE U.S., AND SAID THEIR SUSPENSION WOULD GREATLY DISRUPT OUR EFFORTS TO OFFSET THE SOVIET BUILDUP IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, A MATTER IN WHICH THAILAND ALSO HAD AN INTEREST. HE NOTED THERE HAD BEEN NO PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE SUPPORT ACTIVITIES AND ASKED THAT THEY CONTINUE DURING THE RTG'S REVIEW OF THE MATTER. ONLY AFTER THE AMBASSADOR'S URGING, UTILIZING A WIDE RANGE OF ARGUMENTS, DID THE FOREIGN MINISTER FINALLY CONCEDE THAT FOR THE TIME BEING SUPPORT FLIGHTS COULD CONTINUE WHILE HIS GOVERNMENT STUDIED THE MATTER.

4. THE FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTED ON HIS COUNTRY'S DOMESTIC
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PROBLEMS AND ASKED THAT THE U.S., AS A FRIENDLY COUNTRY, BE AWARE OF THEM. HE REPEATED IT WAS MAINLY BECAUSE OF THESE INTERNAL FACTORS THAT THE RTG HAD FELT COMPELLED TO REQUEST THE U.S. TO STOP INDIAN OCEAN ACTIVITIES FROM THAILAND. CONSIDERABLE QUESTIONS WERE RAISED BY THE THAI OFFICIALS REGARDING THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE U.S. CONDUCTING P-3 FLIGHTS FROM OTHER BASES, INFIGHT REFUELING, AND THE USE OF OTHER TYPES OF AIRCRAFT.

5. REGARDING TYPES OF AIRCRAFT, THE FOREIGN MINISTER STATED THAT THE P-3 RECONNAISSANCE PLANE WAS BECOMING A SENSITIVE ITEM IN THAILAND AND HE SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE FOR THE U.S. TO USE ANOTHER TYPE OF AIRCRAFT TO ACHIEVE ITS MISSIONS FROM UTAPAO. AMBASSADOR KINTNER REPLIED THAT THE P-3 WAS USED PRIMARILY IN RELATION TO OUR EFFORTS TO DETER AGGRESSION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, WITH ITS INDIAN OCEAN ROLE BEING COMPARATIVELY SMALLER. HE UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE P-3 FLIGHTS OVER INDOCHINA AND URGED THAT THE THAI CURRENTLY KEEP SEPARATE THEIR CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE INDIAN OCEAN FROM INDOCHINA. THE FOREIGN MINISTER AGREED WITH THIS.

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER INSTRUCTION SS-O MR. KURZE.

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6. THE FOREIGN MINISTER MADE CLEAR THE IMPORTANCE OF ABSOLUTELY NO PUBLICITY RPT NO PUBLICITY BEING GIVEN TO INDIAN OCEAN SUPPORT ACTIVITIES, SINCE HE WISHED TO AVOID THIS BECOMING A PUBLIC ISSUE IN THAILAND. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT IF ASKED DIRECTLY BY THE PRESS OR THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, HE WOULD OF COURSE HAVE TO RESPOND TRUTHFULLY TO THE QUESTIONS. HE ALSO REQUESTED THAT, SHOULD THE MATTER BECOME PUBLIC, THE WORD "LOGISTICS" NOT BE USED IN DESCRIBING SUPPORT FLIGHTS, BECAUSE IT COULD CONNOTE MILITARY ACTIVITIES. HE SUGGESTED THAT "FOOD AND MATERIEL FLIGHTS" WOULD BE PREFERABLE TERMINOLOGY.

7. IT WAS AGREED THAT THE RESPONSE TO ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT

THIS PARTICULAR MEETING WOULD BE THAT THE AMBASSADOR AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD DISCUSSED SEVERAL SUBJECTS, THE MAIN ONE BEING THE CLOSING OF TAKLI AND PHASEDOWN OF UBON AIR-BASES.

8. CONCLUSION AND COMMENT: THE RTG POSITION IS THAT NON-RECONNAISSANCE P-3 AND OTHER SUPPORT AIRCRAFT IN INDIAN OCEAN OPERATIONS WILL HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE RTG AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL PRIOR TO THEIR DECISION. SUPPORT FLIGHTS, HENCEFORTH TO BE REFERRED TO AS "FOOD AND MATERIEL FLIGHTS," INCLUDING P-3 NONRECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS, CAN CONTINUE FOR THE TIME BEING, PENDING THE RTG DECISION.

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IT IS HOPED THAT THE RTG WILL APPROVE SOME KIND OF AUTHORITY FOR "FOOD AND MATERIEL" FLIGHTS FROM THAILAND TO THE INDIAN OCEAN. MEANWHILE, IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT OUR ACTIONS IN THIS AREA BE BEYOND REPROACH AND THAT WE NOT BLOW THE MATTER BY NEEDLESS LEAKS OF INFORMATION OR MALADROIT TIMING OF SUCH FLIGHTS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN A FAVORABLE DECISION BY THE RTG ON THIS IMPORTANT MATTER.

A MORE DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THAT PORTION OF THE DISCUSSION WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER ON U.S. ACTIVITIES IN THAILAND IN SUPPORT OF INDIAN OCEAN POLICY IS REPORTED BY SEPTEL (REF G), IN ORDER THAT THE WASHINGTON AUDIENCE CAN OBTAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE WAY IN WHICH THE THAI MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS IS DEALING WITH THIS PROBLEM.
KINTNER

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER INSTRUCTIONS SS-O. MR. KURZE.

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